

By Bill Lambrecht, St. Louis Post-Dispatch
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WASHINGTON — **Families USA**, a national organization pushing for health-care reform, released a report this morning estimating the loss of health insurance due to rising unemployment.

Extrapolating from recent **Census** data, the group released reports for **Missouri** and **Nebraska**, concluding that the number of uninsured adults in Missouri under the age of 65 rose by 65,000 so far this year — to 672,000 from 607,000. (Nebraska uninsured increased by 10,600.)

“People who get a pink slip experience a double whammy. They not only lose their jobs, they lose their health care as well,” **Families USA** executive director **Ron Pollack** said in a conference call with reporters.

Pollack pointed to unemployment statistics for Missouri: In 2008, joblessness averaged 6.1 percent. This year so far, it has averaged 8.8 percent.

Pollack observed that the number of uninsured Americans is often put at 46 million, based on Census data for 2008. But the accurate number is over 50 million because of ongoing job losses, he said.

About 3-in-5 adults under 65 get health insurance through their employers. Pollack and other speakers described the plight of newly unemployed people who often are unable to afford **COBRA** or private insurance.

Rep. Russ Carnahan, D-St. Louis, who took part in the session with reporters, said the numbers convey “a sense of urgency ... We know it’s not sustainable, it’s not affordable and it’s not fair.”

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